National Professional Standards for Teachers: Developing Teachers' Professionalism at Secondary Level

Sumera Munawar[*], Khadija Sattar[**] and Mehwish Gull[***]

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Abstract

Objective of the present study was to investigate the Role of National Professional Standards for teachers: Developing teachers' professionalism at secondary level. Population of the study was consisted of all secondary school teachers of Lahore District. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from 100 male and 100 female secondary school teachers of Lahore District. Instrument was developed by the researcher on five dimensions of NPST (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill, instructional planning and strategies and assessment). The study was delimited to these five standards only because of time constraints. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. It is concluded that male and female secondary school teachers perceived that National Professional Standards has a significance role to develop professionalism among secondary school teachers. It is further revealed that secondary school teachers have differences of opinions about NPST regarding their age, however, no differences of opinions about NPST in terms of their discipline was found. It is recommended to implement NPSTs for all teachers at secondary level.

Keywords: NPST, Professionalism, Secondary Level

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Introduction

According to Ahmad (2011) the world seems to shift paradigm into knowledge based economy from materialistic views. Every profession is guided through policies, rules and standards in order to enhance quality and coping with the global issues and emerging challenges. For excellent performance professionalism among employees plays a significant role. Tichenor and Tichenor, (2005) stated that still professionalism is difficult to define although it is used in different fields of professional life. Professionalism in the view of Hoyle (2001) is not an improvement of status but it is defined as quality of services. The achievement of high level of professional standards and attitude towards job is called professionalism which is considered as multi-dimensional concept. Therefore, Boyt, Lusch, and Naylor (2001) professionalism might be defined as self-control, professional autonomy, enhancing living standard, enhancing quality services and occupational status.

In order to improve the quality of educational process Ali (2001) the educational leaders, researchers and policymakers are focusing on professionalism worldwide during the last decade. Hence, excellence in teaching, and professional knowledge are the basic requirements of teaching profession. It included teachers' attitude towards teaching, teaching competencies and comprehension of teaching process. All the matters related to curriculum, students' assessment, care are the issues addressed in teaching profession (Rizvi, 2003).

Wei, Andree, and Darling-Hammond (2009) stated that for a successful education system focused teachers' professionalism as an important area of quality education are the common elements discussed in policies in developing countries. In developing countries education system provides opportunities for CPD, teaching involvements in decision-making in curriculum development and instructions. In across the world professional development becomes the ultimate goal of education. Kramer (2003) in order to develop teachers' disposition, skills and knowledge professionalism emphasizes on preparing prospective teachers in this regard.

Teaching experience and comprehending pedagogical skills of teachers through training promotes professionalism in teacher education process. In education policies professionalism is considered an important area in order to enhance quality of education. By devising educational policies, professional standards and benchmarks the teaching profession is developed in many countries. For example, the major focus of teacher education policies in Finland is based on a research-oriented approach which will heighten teachers' professionalism. In the United Kingdom policy-makers put efforts to develop standards and linked them towards the development of professionalism (Webb, Vulliamy, Hamalainen, Sarja, Kimonen, & Nevalainen 2004).

In a society, there are some standards known as demands or targets, now days it is need of to keep uniformity in those standards. Shami (2006) defined standard as, statements which clearly explain the expectations, beliefs and practices about the level of provided services. Standards are mostly used to define the pre services, introductory trainings and certification system to provide an effective side map of professional development. In teacher education, standards are mainly used to ensure quality and focused on the significance of professional development of teachers in pre service and during service. Standards in teacher education are the professional requirements and skill development of teachers through which they may be able to contribute in developing of knowledge based economy. Government took productive initiatives in collaboration with several international organizations like "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization" (UNESCO) in launching of projects like "Stretching Teacher Education in Pakistan" (STEP) sponsored by "U.S. Agency for International Development "(USAID). For the development of professional standers in teacher education stakeholders were called from all provinces of Pakistan. These standards were designed to define important skills, attributes and important details which are requirement of teacher education. These standards also provide guidelines about important points for accreditation of different institutions and teachers. These standards were presented on 7 November, 2008 although these are not static, every year necessary changings and amendments are made I documents. Every standard must have three points, first is knowledge and understandings which included what teachers should know. And 2nd is dispositions which state the attributes and behavior and last is performances on the base of skills.

Brief details of NPSTs have been implemented in Pakistan are including subject matter knowledge; human growth and development; knowledge of Islamic ethical value /social life skills; instructional planning and strategies; assessment; learning environment; effective communication and proficient use of information communication technology; collaboration and partnership; continuous professional development and code of conduct; and the teaching of English as a second /foreign language. These standards are, in fact, the main pillars of quality instruction but the question arises whether they are followed with the same spirit and interest as expected. That's why an effort has been made to evaluate the teachers in light of the mentioned standards

Methodology

Objective of the present study was to investigate the role of National Professional Standards for teachers in developing teachers' professionalism at secondary level. Population of the study was consisted of all secondary school teachers of Lahore District. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from 100 male and 100 female

secondary school teachers of Lahore District. Instrument was developed by the researcher on five dimensions of NPST (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development, Knowledge of Ethical Values/Islamic and Social Skill, Instructional Planning and Strategies and assessment). Reliability of the instrument was calculated by using Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.873. The study was delimited to these five standards only because of time constraints. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to analyze data.

Results

Table 1
Standard 1: Subject Matter Knowledge

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Teacher understands basic concepts related to the subject they are teaching	50.0	38.0	5.0	6.5	0.5	4.31	0.87
2	Teacher uses several different sources other than books	49.0	44.5	1.5	3.5	1.5	4.36	0.80
3	Teacher takes into consideration the prior knowledge of the students	45.5	42.5	4.5	6.0	1.5	4.25	0.90
4	Teacher elaborates the content with the help of everyday examples	50.0	37.0	4.0	5.5	3.5	4.25	1.01
5	Teacher uses appropriate tools for teaching	47.0	38.0	4.0	9.5	1.5	4.20	0.99

Table 1 shows teachers' perceptions about subject matter knowledge at secondary level. It is indicated that 88% teachers were satisfied about their understanding of basic concepts related to the subject they are teaching on the other hand 93.5% teachers use several different sources other than books, moreover 88% teacher take into consideration the prior knowledge of the students, furthermore, 87% teachers elaborate the content with the help of everyday examples. Majority 85% teacher uses appropriate tools for teaching.

Table 2
Standard 2: Human Growth and Development

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Teacher takes into consideration the level of the students and class while teaching	43.5	41.5	6.0	6.0	3.0	4.17	0.99
2	Teacher understands differences among the students.	34.5	46.5	5.5	10.5	3.0	3.99	1.04
3	Teacher encourages the students for thinking differently	46.5	41.0	6.0	4.5	2.0	4.26	0.90
4	Teacher encourages collaboration by putting students into pairs or groups for problem solving	43.5	37.5	12.0	5.5	1.5	4.16	0.94
5	Teacher treats student equally	31.0	45.0	13.5	8.5	2.0	3.95	0.98

Table 2 shows teachers' perceptions about human growth and development. It is revealed that 85% teachers take into consideration the level of the students and class while teaching, moreover 81% teachers understand differences among the students, on the other hand 87.5% teachers encourage the students for thinking differently. So, it is considered that 81% teachers encourage collaboration by putting students into pairs or groups for problem solving. Majority of think that 76% Teacher treats student equally.

Table 3
Standard 3: Knowledge of Ethical Values/Islamic and Social Skill

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Teacher knows Islamic ethical values	28.5	42.5	15.0	11.0	3.0	3.83	1.05
2	Teacher encourages the students to promote Islamic values inside and outside the classroom	34.0	45.0	11.5	5.0	4.5	3.99	1.03
3	Teacher inculcates the Islamic values among the students at the beginning of his lesson	36.0	34.5	8.5	15.5	5.5	3.80	1.23
4	Teacher teaches Islamic and moral values to the students with the help of examples from everyday life	34.5	35.0	16.5	11.0	3.0	3.87	1.10
5	Teacher incorporates such morals that can help students to become good human beings	47.5	27.0	18.5	6.0	1.0	4.14	0.98

Table 3 shows teachers' perceptions about knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill. It is considered that 71% teachers know Islamic ethical values. So, 79% teachers encourage the students to promote Islamic values inside and outside the classroom. On the other hand 70.5% teachers inculcate the Islamic values among the students at the beginning of his lesson. Moreover 69.5% teachers teach Islamic and moral values to the students with the help of examples from everyday life. Finally 74.5% teachers incorporate such morals that can help students to become good human beings.

Table 4

Standard no 4: Instructional Planning and Strategies

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Teacher uses varied instructional tools for better comprehension of the content	45.5	21.0	11.0	17.0	5.5	3.84	1.31
2	Teacher plans their lessons before	45.5	28.0	5.5	17.0	4.0	3.94	1.24
3	Teacher makes use of various assessment techniques for the better learning of the students.	49.5	39.5	5.0	4.0	2.0	4.31	0.89
4	Teacher fosters self confidence among the students for better learning	35.5	32.0	10.0	14.0	8.5	3.72	1.30
5	Teacher prefers to choose a learn centered approach in the classroom	24.5	37.0	13.0	18.0	7.5	3.53	1.24

Table 4 shows teachers' perceptions about instructional planning and strategies. It is shown that 66.5% teachers use varied instructional tools for better comprehension of the content. Extended by more 72.5% teachers plan their lessons before. More, 89% teachers make use of various assessment techniques for the better learning of the students. It is indicated that 67.5% teachers foster self confidence among the students for better learning. Majority of concept that 61.5% teachers prefer to choose a learn centered approach in the classroom.

Table 5
Standard 5: Assessment

Sr. No.	Statements	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	M	SD
1	Teacher knows different assessment methods	45.5	27.5	8.5	12.0	6.5	3.94	1.26
2	Teacher assesses the students' learning through formative assessment	40.0	39.0	7.5	10.5	3.0	4.03	1.08
3	Teacher believes in assessing students via different activities	35.0	36.0	13.5	10.0	5.5	3.85	1.16
4	Teacher exhibits fair assessment to the students	40.0	43.0	5.5	10.0	1.5	4.10	0.99
5	Teacher involves the students in self- assessment	15.5	41.0	27.5	13.0	3.0	3.53	1.00

Table 5 shows teachers' perceptions about assessment. It is indicated that 73% teachers know different assessment methods. It is pointed that 79% teachers assessed the students' learning through formative assessment. Moreover, 71% teachers believe in assessing students via different activities, on the other hand 83% teachers exhibit fair assessment to the students. More, 56.5% teachers involve the students in self- assessment.

Table 6
Gender wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers

Measures	Gender	N	M	SD	df	t- value	Sig.
Subject Matter and Knowledge	Male	100	19.79	4.08	130.935	-7.069	0.000
	Female	100	22.91	1.66			
Human Growth and Development	Male	100	19.24	3.17	174.64	-6.629	0.000
	Female	100	21.79	2.16			
Knowledge of Ethical Values/Islamic and Social Skill	Male	100	18.73	3.57	198	-3.763	0.191
	Female	100	20.52	3.13			
Instructional Planning and Strategies	Male	100	17.55	3.92	198	-6.832	0.55
	Female	100	21.12	3.45			
Assessment	Male	100	17.48	4.47	-7.831	-7.831	0.000
	Female	100	21.4	2.24			

Table 6 shows male and female teachers' perceptions about NPST at secondary school level. It is showed that "a significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' perceptions about (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development and assessment) as compared to the other dimensions (knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill and instructional planning and strategies)".

Table 7

Discipline wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers

Measures	Teaching Subject	N	M	SD	df	t- value	Sig.
Subject Matter and	Arts	98	21.45	3.38	198	0.434	0.999
Knowledge	Science	102	21.24	3.59			
Human Growth and	Arts	98	20.42	2.77	198	-0.399	0.191
Development	Science	102	20.59	3.20			
Knowledge of Ethical	Arts	98	19.94	3.61	198	1.295	0.684
Values/Islamic and	Science	102	19.31	3.31			
Social Skill							
Instructional Planning	Arts	98	19.73	4.00	198	1.355	0.285
and Strategies	Science	102	18.95	4.16			
Assessment	Arts	98	19.60	4.08	198	0.555	0.723
	Science	102	19.28	4.01			

Table 7 shows arts and science teachers' perceptions about NPST at secondary school level. It is showed that "no significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' perceptions about (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill and instructional planning and strategies and assessment)".

Table 8

Qualification wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers

Measures	SS	MS	df	F	Sig.
Subject Matter and Knowledge	132.033	66.016	2	5.695	0.004
	2283.467	11.591	197		
	2415.500		199		
Human Growth and	112.113	56.056	2	6.582	0.002
Development	1677.842	8.517	197		
	1789.955		199		
Knowledge of Ethical	186.568	93.284	2	8.299	0.000
Values/Islamic and Social Skill	2214.307	11.240	197		
	2400.875		199		
Instructional Planning and	298.220	149.110	2	9.655	0.000
Strategies	3042.335	15.443	197		
	3340.555		199		
Assessment	227.534	113.767	2	7.417	0.001
	3021.746	15.339	197		
	3249.280		199		

Table 8 shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their qualification. It is showed that "a significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' perceptions about (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill and instructional planning and strategies and assessment)".

Table 8(a)

Qualification wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers (Post hoc, Tukey)

Academic Qualification (I)	Academic Qualification (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	*Sig.*
BA/B. Sc.	M. Phil	17.16279*	0.000
MA/M. Sc.	M. Phil	16.53571*	0.000
		-17.16279*	0.000
M. Phil	BA/B. Sc.	-16.53571*	0.000
	MA/M. Sc.		

Table 8(a) shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their qualification. It is showed that a significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' having qualification BA/ BSc as compared to the teachers having qualification MA/ MSc and MPhil.

Table 9

Experience wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers

Measures	SS	MS	df	F	Sig.
Subject Matter and Knowledge	290.546	58.109	5	5.305	0.000
	2124.954	10.953	194		
	2415.500		199		
Human Growth and Development	182.373	36.475	5	4.402	0.001
	1607.582	8.287	194		
	1789.955		199		
Knowledge of Ethical Values/Islamic and Social Skill	146.100	29.220	5	2.514	0.031
	2254.775	11.623	194		
	2400.875		199		
Instructional Planning and Strategies	308.445	61.689	5	3.947	0.002
	3032.110	15.629	194		
	3340.555		199		
Assessment	372.219	74.444	5	5.020	0.000
	2877.061	14.830	194		
	3249.280		199		

Table 9 shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their experience. It is showed that "a significance difference was found between the perception of secondary school teachers' perceptions about (subject matter and knowledge, experience and age, human growth and development, knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill and instructional planning and strategies and assessment)".

Table 9(a)

Experience wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers (Post hoc, Tukey)

Teaching Experience (I)	Teaching Experience (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
1-5 Years	11-15 Years	-15.33882*	0.000
	16-20 Years	-16.04167*	0.000
6-10 Years	11-15 Years	-9.85132*	0.002
	16-20 Years	-10.55417*	0.001
11-15 Years	1-5 Years	15.33882*	0.000
	6-10 Years	9.85132*	0.002
16-20 Years	1-5 Years	16.04167*	0.000
	6-10 Years	10.55417*	0.001

Table 9(a) shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their qualification. It is showed that a significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' in terms of their experience.

Table 10

Age wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers

Measures	SS	MS	df	F	Sig.
Subject Matter and Knowledge	421.171	84.234	5	8.194	0.000
	1994.329	10.280	194		
	2415.500		199		
Human Growth and Development	275.511	55.102	5	7.059	0.000
	1514.444	7.806	194		
	1789.955		199		
Knowledge of Ethical Values/Islamic and Social Skill	175.371	35.074	5	3.057	0.011
	2225.504	11.472	194		
	2400.875		199		
Instructional Planning and Strategies	319.981	63.996	5	4.110	0.001
	3020.574	15.570	194		
	3340.555		199		
Assessment	272.935	54.587	5	3.558	0.004
	2976.345	15.342	194		
	3249.280		199		

Table 10 shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their age. It is showed that "a significance difference was found between the perception of secondary school teachers' perceptions about (subject matter and knowledge, human growth and development, knowledge of ethical values/Islamic and social skill and instructional planning and strategies and assessment)".

Table 10(a)

Age wise Differences of Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions about Role of NPST in Developing Professionalism among Teachers (Post hoc, Tukey)

Age (I)	Age (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
20-25 Years	36-40 Years	-25.08718*	0.007
	41-45 Years	-26.31447*	0.004
26-30 Years	36-40 Years	-14.75385*	0.000
	41-45 Years	-15.98113*	0.000
31-35 Years	41-45 Year	-9.02659*	0.041
36-40 Years	20-25 Years	25.08718*	0.007
	26-30 Years	14.75385*	0.000
41-45 Years	20-25 Years	26.31447*	0.004
	26-30 Years	15.98113*	0.000
	31-35 years	9.02659*	0.041

A post hoc (Tukey) shows secondary school teachers' perceptions about different dimensions of NPST at secondary school level regarding their age. It is showed that a significance difference was found between the perception of male and female teachers' in terms of their ages.

Discussion

Objective of the present study was to investigate the Role of National Professional Standards for teachers: Developing teachers' professionalism at secondary level. It is concluded that male and female secondary school teachers perceived that National Professional Standards has a significance role to develop professionalism among secondary school teachers. Findings of the study revealed that teachers said that NPSTs are not followed in secondary schools properly because teachers are not well-aware of the standards to meet. A study conducted by Rahim and Saif (2009) an evaluation of "National Professional Standards" in which they concluded that NPSTs are not implementing in many institutes properly. It is observed that teachers have no proper link of their training with their instructional strategies, portfolio, instructional strategies in the class etc. which may show their professionalism. Teachers were also not able to tell the names of their students because of poor interaction in the class. It is showed the lack of awareness and command over NPSTs. It is further revealed that secondary school teachers have differences of opinions about NPST regarding their age but they have no differences of opinions about NPST in terms of their discipline. It is concluded that in secondary schools, teachers should practice NPSTs in their classrooms in order to develop professionalism among them which would lead teaching and learning process towards progress.

Recommendations

Further it is recommended that:

1. Education department need to develop a plan for trainings to develop professionalism among teachers on NPSTs.
2. Teachers' should be aware of the significance about NPSTs through workshops, seminars, conferences and media.
3. A sound professional development among secondary school teachers is recommended to make their concepts clear about pedagogies, classroom instructions and individual professional growth.
4. Teachers should motivate towards quality instructions by adopting NPSTs.

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